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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

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Identical letters dated 7 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the annexed statement made by the President of Georgia on 7 August 2008 regarding the latest developments in the Tskhinvali region, Georgia.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Permanent Representative

08-45469 (E) 080808

Annex to the identical letters dated 7 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Special address of the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili

My dear fellow citizens!

I would like to address South Ossetia, I want to address all of Georgian society, all of our multi-ethnic Georgian society. I want to address ethnic Georgians and ethnic Ossetians, ethnic Russians and ethnic Jews, living in the conflict zone — all citizens of our country, regardless of their ethnicity.

My dear fellow citizens!

The situation in and around Tskhinvali has just worsened. In recent days, the permanent provocations, violations, murders and other offences to which we have become accustomed now have escalated dangerously and threaten the peace.

I myself do not understand why the separatists became so aggressive exactly at this time. First, they attacked several times the Head of the Provisional Administration of South Ossetia, Dimitry Sanakoev, who was formerly one of the separatist leaders and who opted for peace. Then, they began attacking Georgian police, peacekeeping posts and mobile patrols. During the last few days, they undertook large-scale attacks and are continuing to attack peaceful civilians in villages.

Sniper assaults on civilians in Georgian villages are still under way. Even at this moment, as I speak to you, intensive fire is coming from artillery, tanks, and other weapons, such as mortars and grenade launchers, that have been illegally deployed in the conflict zone.

We have been in constant contact with the leadership of the local Russian peacekeeping forces.

Several hours ago, they told us that they had completely lost control over the actions of the separatists.

I dispatched to Tskhinvali Mr. Temur Iakobashvili — the State Minister for Reintegration and the Special Representative of the President in the negotiating process — in order to conduct direct talks regarding a ceasefire.

The separatists refused to accept him and sent him back from the conflict zone without any results.

We are in constant contact with the leadership of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry tells us Russia is trying to stop the separatists from engaging in armed action, but without any success.

I would like to directly address those people who are at this moment shooting peaceful civilians and Georgian police forces.

You have been shooting during the last several days and especially in the last several hours.

I want to declare with full responsibility and confess that several hours ago, in my capacity as Commander in Chief of Georgia, I issued a very painful order directing all Georgian police forces and other units under our control not to return fire, even if they face intensive bombing.

I did this very deliberately.

However, I would like to state that in the hours since, during which time our forces and civilians have fallen victim — there are many casualties and many wounded, many houses have been destroyed and damaged — I did this deliberately in order to have the possibility to stand before you and call for an immediate ceasefire and immediate negotiations.

I continue to support the peace plan for South Ossetia that I introduced three years ago, a plan that has been developed over the course of many years. It includes practically unrestricted autonomy and local governance for South Ossetia, special safeguards for the human rights of every ethnic Ossetian, autonomy under international guarantees and an autonomous structure created according to European Union standards.

I am proposing that the Russian Federation act as a guarantor of South Ossetian autonomy within Georgia. I act with full responsibility, so that Russia, Georgia, and European countries can participate in the peacekeeping process. The local population must feel that they are defended by the international community, by people who deserve their trust.

I want to say that, despite the fact that many people have been killed and robbed, have had their possessions absolutely destroyed, we are offering full amnesty to everyone who has committed such criminal acts punishable under Georgian law, if they immediately cease fire. I am willing to take even such a consequential step. The Georgian Government is ready to forgive the crimes committed in recent years in order to secure peace, to continue the peacekeeping process and negotiations.

We offer all of you partnership and friendship, despite your violations against the Georgian State and the local population, no matter what acts you committed, acts that are punishable under Georgian and international laws. Because peace is of greater value, more vital than anything else. We are ready for any sort of agreement in the interest of peace.

But I once again would like to address you.

My dear people, my dear fellow citizens!

I love Ossetians as a President and as an ordinary citizen of this country.

I admire and respect Ossetian history and culture.

Every ethnic Ossetian has been an inseparable part of Georgian history for centuries.

We are proud of you and our unity. Georgia is strong for its diversity. Georgia has never been and will never be a mono-ethnic country. Georgia belongs to all of us regardless of our ethnicity.

Let's take care of our country together. Let's together avoid the violence. Let's work together for a better future. Let's forget everything negative that has happened in the past and let's together think about our common future.

I would like to address the international community. Nobody should try to present the Georgian Government as a supporter of any kind of violence. For so many days, we have been reaching out to our partners — today we have spoken to several world leaders — to help us stop the escalation of violence. We ask that you help us conduct direct negotiations, to guarantee the autonomous status of South Ossetia and to internationalize the peace process. We also ask for your assistance in holding a more results-oriented dialogue.

We are doing everything to avoid escalation of the violence.

I would like to address the Russian Federation as well.

Georgia is a natural ally of Russia.

Any President of Georgia — and myself above all, since I know well what Russia means for Georgia — will always be committed to good relations with Russia, assuming that Russia respects the territorial integrity of Georgia, the sovereignty of Georgia and the inviolability of the State borders of Georgia.

In recent years, South Ossetia, for all intents and purposes, is directly administered by the Russian Federation.

There are ministers in the separatist government in Tskhinvali, for instance, who are also officials of the Russian Government and who have been sent to South Ossetia on mission.

I request from Russia and the separatists to pull these ministers out; they have nothing to do in South Ossetia; they do not contribute to the historical friendship between Georgians and South Ossetians. To the contrary: they hamper the restoration of our traditional allied relations.

We need true mediators, and we offer the Russian Federation an important role in resolving this conflict.

We can accomplish many things together. But for now, we must return to the situation as it stands today.

Georgia is undertaking an immediate, unilateral ceasefire. We do not have the will to respond to violence with yet more violence.

We have been tolerating this for so many years. We have not responded to so many provocations throughout the years, to countless violations. No other State would have shown such restraint. Please, do not test the Georgian State's patience. Because this is your country, which is willing to defend each of you.

Let's stop this spiral of violence. I address everyone: let's do everything to stop the escalation — today, tomorrow, or the day after — and return to the negotiating table. Let's use every possible format — direct, multilateral and other formats — to overcome this absolutely critical situation, to come out of this unacceptable deadlock in which we all find ourselves.

My dear people!

I rely on your wisdom, on your historical experience, that lies in our shared past and in our genes.

This is the Caucasus, where violence harms everyone.

Let's give peace and dialogue a chance.

I really believe in you!

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Identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statements issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on 8 and 9 August 2008 regarding the situation in Georgia (see annexes I and II).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Permanent Representative

08-45755 (E) 120808

Annex I to the identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

8 August 2008

As a result of massive bombings of Tskhinvali by Russian air force and artillery on 8 August 2008, the town was almost completely destroyed. However, the most tragic fact is that the bombing was undertaken during the three-hour ceasefire moratorium announced by the Georgian Government. Due to this circumstance, civilians were not able to make use of the safe corridor provided by the Georgian side and thus escape the zone of military actions. This situation has driven the Tskhinvali region to the edge of a humanitarian catastrophe. In the current situation, the Georgian side is making the utmost efforts to ease the plight of the civilians.

It should be mentioned that against the background of the Olympic Games in Beijing and the urging by the United Nations General Assembly to sustain the Olympic peace, the barbaric acts on behalf of Russia are a cause of particular concern.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia urges the international community to condemn the open aggression of the Russian Federation against Georgia and to marshal all its efforts towards the restoration of peace and security in the region.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia

9 August 2008

On 9 August 2008 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation released another cynical statement, in which it accused the Government of Ukraine of facilitating ethnic cleansing in the Tskhinvali region.

It is surprising that the Russian Federation speaks with other States about morality when the regular army of Russia carries out full-scale military actions against sovereign Georgia and bombs civilian populations with all means available throughout the entire territory of Georgia.

During all these years the Russian Federation intensively armed the criminal regime of Tskhinvali, which held hostage the population residing in the conflict zone. The militarization of the region served only one purpose: to conduct full-scale open aggression against Georgia under the cover of a peacekeeping operation.

What Russia is doing currently in Georgia represents a logical continuation of the traditions of fascist and Soviet regimes.

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Identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of the Appeals of the Parliament of Georgia to the population residing in the territory of the former autonomous district of South Ossetia and to the international community on 8 August 2008 (see annexes I and II).

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Permanent Representative

08-45761 (E) 120808

Annex I to the identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Appeal of the Parliament of Georgia to the population residing in the territory of the former autonomous district of South Ossetia

8 August 2008

Despite the systematic efforts of the Georgian authorities, by means of dialogue and negotiations, to create conditions for the peaceful settlement of the conflict, the separatist regime of Kokoiti and its subordinate illegal armed formations purposefully were trying to escalate and increase the tension of the situation. Their recently realized actions shall be definitely assessed as military aggression against the Georgian State and, first of all, against the peaceful population residing in the territory of the former autonomous district of South Ossetia. The illegal armed formations opened fire on the peaceful population and, despite the fact that for the sake of maintenance of peace the Georgian authorities were refraining from opening fire in response, they continued the terrorization of the peaceful population and mass bombings.

On the basis of the above-mentioned, the Georgian authorities have been forced to take all measures for the protection of the peaceful population in the region, cleaning the territory of the illegal armed formations and the creation of necessary conditions for peace, stability and development.

The Parliament of Georgia reiterates the firm will of the Georgian authorities to build a unified, democratic State, where the rights and freedoms of all persons will be guaranteed, regardless of their ethnic origin.

The Parliament of Georgia appeals to the ethnic Ossetian citizens of the region and once more confirms that in the unified Georgian State the full spectrum of their rights and freedoms will be guaranteed, their identity and development will be safeguarded in the entire country and they will have all the necessary conditions for the realization of their cultural, economic, social and political rights.

The Parliament of Georgia appeals to the population of the region to keep calm and to refrain from participation in the military activities inspired by the illegal armed formations.

The Parliament of Georgia expresses the belief that in the nearest future peace will be restored in the region and all the conditions for peace, development, stability and dignified life will be created in the territory of the former autonomous district of South Ossetia.

Annex II to the identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Appeal of the Parliament of Georgia to the international community

8 August 2008

Despite the systematic efforts of the Georgian authorities, by means of dialogue and negotiations, to create conditions for the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the former autonomous district of South Ossetia, the Tskhinvali separatist regime and illegal armed formations subordinate to it were purposefully trying to escalate and charge the situation. Their recently committed actions shall be definitely assessed as armed aggression against the Georgian State and, first of all, against the population residing in the territory of the former autonomous district of South Ossetia. The illegal armed formations opened fire on the peaceful population and, in spite of the fact that for the sake of maintenance of peace, the Georgian authorities refrained from opening fire in response, they continued the terrorization of the peaceful population and mass bombings.

On the basis of the above-mentioned, the Georgian authorities have been forced to take all measures for the protection of the peaceful population in the region, cleaning the territory of illegal formations and the creation of necessary conditions for peace, stability and development.

The situation is complicated by the circumstance that the de facto "Government" of South Ossetia is actually composed of officials, sent from Russia, who to date are the active employees of the Russian power bodies. They do not represent the interests of the Ossetian population of the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia and they had never lived in the region before their assignment to their positions. The Georgian authorities have several times appealed to the Russian authorities to take these people back from the region, which would have been a serious precondition for the normalization of the situation.

Unfortunately, instead of bringing peace to the conflict zone, Russia carries out the mobilization of illegal armed formations (so-called "volunteers"), giving out to them armaments and heavy military equipment, and their transfer to the conflict region through the Rocki Tunnel.

The Ministry of Defence of Russia also participates in the aggression against Georgia. On 8 August Russian military aviation several times violated the airspace of Georgia and attacked settlements in the Kareli, Gori, Marneuli and Tskhinvali districts and suburbs of Tbilisi. At the same time, the places selected as targets for air bombing have been especially those where there are dense gatherings of the peaceful population — namely, the market of the city of Gori and the stadium.

It is unacceptable and cynical on the side of Russian authorities to justify the military aggression on the pretext of protection of the citizens of Russia in Georgia. The history of Europe very well remembers the results of such policies, when in the 1930s the military occupation of sovereign Czechoslovakia by the Nazi regime

happened with the motivation of protection of the interests of an ethnic group residing in one of the regions of that country.

In such conditions, the Parliament of Georgia considers that the country is in the circumstances of undeclared war from the side of the Russian Federation and it is entitled, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to take all measures to secure the sovereignty and protection of the security of the peaceful population.

At the same time, the Parliament of Georgia reiterates the firm will of the Georgian authorities to settle all the problems by means of dialogue and to build a unified, democratic State, where the rights and freedoms of all persons, regardless of their ethnic origin, will be safeguarded.

The Parliament of Georgia calls on the parliaments of partner countries, the international community and the world democratic community to make all efforts so as to stop the broad-scale military aggression of Russia against Georgia, to defuse the situation in the Tskhinvali region and to start the peaceful settlement process of the conflict with the participation of international, unbiased mediators.

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I have the honour to transmit the annexed press statement issued by the Government of Georgia on 9 August 2008 regarding the situation in Georgia.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 16, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Irakli **Alasania**
Permanent Representative

08-45767 (E) 120808

Annex to the identical letters dated 9 August 2008 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Press statement of the Government of Georgia

9 August 2008

Russia bombs Georgian, European and United States strategic interests

Late last night the Russian air force dropped 30 bombs on the outskirts of Tbilisi near the BTC pipeline and the parallel Shahbeniz pipeline, which transport oil and gas to Europe and the United States of America. Of the 30 bombs that fell, 28 exploded. Several of them came within five metres of the pipelines.

These attacks go far beyond bombing any solely Georgian strategic interests. The BTC pipeline transports about 800 barrels a day to Turkey, Europe and the United States of America and the Shahbeniz pipeline transports 6 million cubic metres of gas a day to Europe.

Russia's attacks have directly threatened the strategic interests of Europe and the United States of America at a time when the world is struggling with high energy prices. Furthermore, Russia is attempting to expand its stranglehold on European energy markets by making several European countries almost completely dependent on Russian energy supplies.